

tares or more of poppy, I will add such countries to the “majors” list at the appropriate time.

*Major Cannabis Producers.* While Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, the Philippines, and South Africa are important cannabis producers, they do not appear on the list since I have determined, pursuant to FAA section 481(a)(2), that in all cases the cannabis is either consumed locally or exported to countries other than the United States, and thus, such illicit cannabis production does not significantly affect the United States.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Claiborne Pell, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Mark O. Hatfield, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 3.

## Teleconference Remarks on the Interagency Task Force Initiative for St. Petersburg, Florida December 3, 1996

*The President.* Hello.

*Mayor David J. Fischer.* Hello.

*The President.* Mr. Mayor.

*Mayor Fischer.* This is Mayor Fischer here, Mr. President.

*The President.* Hello, Mayor. It's nice to hear your voice. I'm here with the Vice President and Secretary Cisneros and Senator Bob Graham. And I think Congressman Young and Congressman Bilirakis are on the phone. And I know you've got some community leaders there. And I appreciate everyone being a part of this conference call today.

When we met in October, I was very impressed by your willingness and determination to address the longstanding problems in your city, and I sent Secretary Cisneros and an interagency task force to St. Petersburg. And as you know, they and your community leaders have agreed that more Federal involvement is necessary. And we've had some recommendations for action that involve a real partnership among Federal agencies, city officials, community leaders. And with that in mind, I have directed the Federal agencies, through their representatives here at the White House—and they're all gathered here—to begin with the proposed initiatives in the November 25th memo that Secretary Cisneros sent me.

A Federal coordinator who will report to the community empowerment board, which is

chaired by the Vice President, will be appointed to work on the ground with you in St. Petersburg. And I'd also like to see the necessary steps taken to put together a local advisory board with broad-based membership as outlined in the memo.

I think that this is going to be a difficult period for you, but I am very impressed by the work you've done, Mr. Mayor, and those who are supporting you. And I am confident that you can work through this. We want to be a good partner to you.

I want to thank all the Florida officials who have supported this. Governor Chiles is not on the phone today, but he talked to me about this extensively—he and the Lieutenant Governor did—when I was with them. And Senator Graham is here with me, and we had a long talk about it the last time I was in Florida. And I thank Congressman Young and Congressman Bilirakis for being on the phone. But most of all, we're proud to assist you. We know this is your challenge and your future, but we think we've got a good plan, and we want to be a good partner.

And I'd like to ask the Vice President just to say a word, and then perhaps the others who are here will be able to speak as well.

[At this point, the Vice President, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry

*Cisneros, Senator Bob Graham, Representative C.W. Bill Young, Representative Michael Bilirakis, and Mayor Fischer made brief remarks on the St. Petersburg empowerment zone initiative.]*

*The President.* Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I know you've got some other community leaders there, and let me just say to all of them, we're pulling for you. We appreciate what you're going through. We want to be here to support you. We know that you can realize your vision of how you want your community to work, how you want people to feel who are living there, and we're determined to stay with you all the way through.

Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, again, for contacting me, for coming to see me, and for making me aware of the situation. We're going to keep going, and we'll be there with you every step of the way.

*Mayor Fischer.* Well, thank you very much. We appreciate you calling us this morning, and your response has been overwhelming. Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Good-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida.

## Remarks Prior to a Briefing on AIDS Research and an Exchange With Reporters

*December 3, 1996*

*The President.* As all of you know, this is World AIDS Awareness Week, and you also know I'm a little hoarse. I'm very excited about the progress we've made in the last 4 years. I'm determined to keep pressing until we have a vaccine and ultimately a cure. And I'd like to ask the Vice President to sort of take over for me with the opening remarks, and then we'll hear from Secretary Shalala. We have some of our Nation's top health officials—our top public health officials here. I thank them for coming, for their work, and I'd like to ask the Vice President to speak.

*The Vice President.* Thank you very much, Mr. President.

As you can tell, the President needs to conserve his vocal cords a little bit. He's had quite a lot to say about this topic of AIDS over the last 4 years, especially internally with this tremendous team that Secretary Shalala has pulled together and led on the President's behalf. And this is one of several briefings that the President has had periodically on the progress our country is making against HIV/AIDS.

And the experts here will provide some statistics to back these assertions up. But let me just briefly, on behalf of the President, note that this administration has presided over a 40 percent increase in NIH-supported AIDS re-

search, a 158 percent increase in Ryan White AIDS treatment grants, a 24 percent increase in CDC HIV-prevention activities, a 96 percent increase for HUD's housing opportunities for people with AIDS program. He has greatly strengthened the Office of AIDS Research at NIH. And as a result of Public Health Service guidelines recommending the use of AZT by HIV-positive pregnant women and their newborns, there has been a very encouraging 17 percent drop in the number of infants with perinatally acquired HIV infections—those are the last statistics available from '94 to '95; also responding rapidly to FDA approval of a new class of AIDS therapies called protease inhibitors, with increases in funding for State AIDS drug assistance programs. We have eased Social Security disability rules to speed approval of eligibility. And of course, the President created the Office of National AIDS Policy at the White House and the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

Last year, at the White House Conference on HIV and AIDS, the President asked me to preside over an effort to look for ways to overcome obstacles in developing new therapeutics, vaccines, and microbicides to combat HIV and AIDS. And we have achieved a great deal since last year. Working with this team here today,